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U.S. POWER SECTOR AGREES TO VOLUNTARY GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTIONS

Emissions intensity to be cut 3-5 percent below 2000-2002 baseline levels

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and a major trade association signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) December 13, establishing a voluntary framework for reducing the greenhouse gas emission intensity -- measured as carbon-equivalent emissions per unit of economic output -- of the power-generation sector.

According to a DOE press release, the group, Power Partners, includes the American Public Power Association, Edison Electric Institute, Electric Power Supply Association, Large Public Power Council, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Nuclear Energy Institute and Tennessee Valley Authority.

"The power generation sector is responsible for about a third of all greenhouse gas emissions in the United States, so getting reductions from this sector is obviously important," said Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham.

The Power Partners pledged to reduce collectively the power sector's greenhouse gas emissions intensity by an equivalent of 3 to 5 percent (measured as emissions per unit of electricity produced) below 2000-2002 baseline levels.

The MOU establishes goals for the public-private partnership and proposes actions to further partner-

ship objectives, including developing and deploying new technologies.

Information about Power Partners is available at:
http://www.ji.org/climate_05.pdf

Text of the DOE press release follows:

U.S. Department of Energy
 Press release, December 13, 2004

Department of Energy - U.S. Power Sector Sign MOU
 on Voluntary Efforts to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

WASHINGTON DC -- The U.S. Department of Energy and Power PartnersSM—a group comprised of the American Public Power Association, Edison Electric Institute, Electric Power Supply Association, Large Public Power Council, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Nuclear Energy Institute, and Tennessee Valley Authority—today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishing a voluntary framework for reducing the greenhouse gas emission intensity of the power generation sector.

Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham lauded the agreement, saying, “The voluntary commitment and activities set out in this MOU will go a long way toward meeting the President’s ambitious emissions intensity objective. The power generation sector is responsible for about a third of all greenhouse gas emissions in the United States, so getting reductions from this sector is obviously important. This agreement—the first of its kind with the power sector—lays a foundation for progress and demonstrates the value of strong public-private partnerships in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.”

Power PartnersSM is one of 13 trade associations or business groups taking part in the Climate VISION (Voluntary Innovative Sector Initiatives: Opportunities Now) program, a Presidential initiative established on February 12, 2003, support the President’s goal of reducing the greenhouse gas emissions intensity of the United States’ economy (measured as carbon-equivalent emissions per unit of economic output) by 18 percent between 2002 and 2012. Power Partners have pledged to reduce collectively the power sector’s greenhouse gas emissions intensity by an equivalent of 3 to 5 percent (measured as emissions per unit of electricity produced) below 2000-2002 baseline levels, as measured over the 2010-2012 period.

The MOU signed today establishes goals for the public-private partnership, sets out general principles, and proposes actions to further the partnership’s objectives. The MOU also recognizes the importance of developing and deploying new technologies. Under the MOU, DOE and Power Partners will work together to develop a process for identifying high-priority areas for the research, development, demonstration & deployment of technologies that could contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Speaking on behalf of Power PartnersSM, Edison Electric Institute President Thomas Kuhn said, “All of the Power PartnersSM believe this is a critical step in reducing greenhouse gas intensity in the United States. The seven power groups will collectively work toward achieving the goal for the sector, setting the stage for significant progress in addressing greenhouse gases.”

For more information on the Climate VISION, please visit the programs website at:
<http://www.climatevision.gov>.

For more information on Power PartnersSM, please visit:
http://www.ji.org/climate_05.pdf.

U.S. EARMARKS \$5 BILLION IN FOREIGN AID TO THE MIDEAST IN FY05

Middle East Partnership Initiative to receive \$75 million

By Najwa Saad
 Washington File Special Correspondent

Washington -- The U.S. government has allocated more than \$5 billion in assistance for countries in the Middle East for fiscal year 2005 (FY05).

Final passage of the assistance package came when the Senate voted 65-30 to approve the Omnibus spending bill on December 6. The budget bill became law with President Bush’s signature on December 8. FY05 began October 1, 2004, and ends September 30, 2005.

“Our assistance programs to countries in the Middle East are critical investments for regional security, to develop a level of economic progress and prosperity that can give

societies political stability in support of peace,” said a State Department official.

Notable in the foreign aid program is funding for the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), launched in December 2002, for which the president requested \$150 million for FY 05. The final congressional allocation is \$75 million.

The MEPI was implemented specifically to focus targeted assistance to support economic, democracy and civil society programs in countries of the Middle East and North Africa. Special initiatives supporting education and women’s empowerment programs are also under way. MEPI is also designed to promote the president’s vision of creating a Middle East free trade area by 2013.

While not mandating a spending figure, Congress recommended the study of providing at least \$4.5 million of the MEPI funds specifically to targeted scholarship programs for students from countries with “significant Muslim populations at accredited American higher education institutions.”

Consistent with previous years, Egypt and Israel will receive the bulk of U.S. aid to the Middle East -- more than \$4.4 billion -- as follow-on support for the Camp David accords of 1978 that resulted in a peace treaty between the two countries.

Egypt will receive \$1.3 billion in military assistance and \$535 million in economic support. A portion of the economic support funds is tied to Egypt’s attainment of significant domestic economic reforms, beyond what it achieved in prior years.

Israel will receive \$2.22 billion in military assistance and \$360 million in economic support. Conditions for the military funding permit Israel to spend up to \$580 million to purchase defense items or invest in research domestically, in Israel.

Also approved was an annual allocation of \$50 million to fund refugee resettlement from the former Soviet Union and “other countries of distress” to Israel.

Jordan, the second Arab country to sign a peace treaty with Israel, is to receive \$250 million in economic aid and \$206 million in military aid.

Consistent with prior years, the administration’s budget includes \$75 million to support Palestinian programs for

the West Bank and Gaza to be administered through the U.S. Agency for International Development Mission office in Tel Aviv.

Lebanon is to receive \$35 million, of which \$4 million is to be spent on scholarships and general support for educational institutions. Tunisia is to receive \$10 million for military support.

CHINA HAS MADE PROGRESS ON WTO COMMITMENTS, BUT PROBLEMS REMAIN

USTR releases report on China’s economic reforms over past three years

The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative says China deserves “due recognition” for the “tremendous efforts” it has made to reform its economy.

In the “2004 Report to Congress on China’s WTO Compliance” made public December 13, the USTR detailed China’s progress in implementing the trade commitments it made three years ago to become a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The report, however, says: “while China’s efforts to fulfill its WTO commitments are impressive, they are far from complete and have not always been satisfactory, and China at times has demonstrated difficulty in adhering to WTO rules.”

Among the areas of particular concern for the United States, according to the report, are intellectual property rights, trading rights and distribution services, insurance, express delivery, telecommunications services, industrial policies and transparency, and agriculture. The report notes that most of China’s key WTO commitments, including trading rights and distribution services, were to be phased in fully by December 11.

“This coming year -- 2005 -- will therefore provide a critical glimpse at what to expect of China as a WTO member once its full range of commitments are in place,” the report says.

The report says the Bush administration will continue to press China to comply fully with its WTO commitments, with particular emphasis on ensuring effective protection

of U.S. patents, trademarks and copyrights in China. The administration is also committed “to working with China to resolve problems in our trade relationship before they become broader bilateral irritants,” the report says.

The full text of the report is available in PDF format at:

http://www.ustr.gov/assets/Document_Library/Reports_Publications/2004/asset_upload_file281_6986.pdf

CHINA’S “ONE-CHILD” POLICY COERCIVE, STATE’S DEWEY SAYS

Investigations show China imposes penalties for out-of-plan births

Investigations conducted by the U.S. Department of State find that China is using coercion to enforce its “one-child” per couple policy, says Arthur Dewey, the U.S. assistant secretary of State for the bureau of population, refugees, and migration.

The evidence, he told the House International Relations Committee during a December 14 hearing, “clearly showed us that the large fees and penalties for out-of-plan births assessed in implementing China’s regulations are tantamount to coercion that leads to abortion.”

Dewey reiterated the Bush administration’s stand that “strongly and absolutely” opposes the practice of coercive abortions and sterilizations wherever they occur.

According to the State Department official, China’s coercive population practices have been -- and remain -- sufficient to trigger the Kemp-Kasten prohibition of U.S. funding to the U.N. Population Fund (UNFPA).

“UNFPA support of, and participation in, China’s population-planning activities allows the Chinese government to implement more effectively its program of coercive abortion, thus triggering the Kemp-Kasten prohibition on support to any organization that supports or participates in the management of a program of coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization,” he said. The result has been that the United States has not funded UNFPA during the past three years.

Since 2002, however, the United States has had continu-

ous discussions with Chinese authorities that have laid out the U.S. stance based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1994 Cairo Declaration on Population and Development that there should be no coercion -- in any form -- in any nation’s population policies, Dewey said.

While there has been “measurable progress in these negotiations,” China’s policies have not changed sufficiently to permit the Bush administration to resume UNFPA funding, Dewey said.

“China’s birth planning law and policies retain harshly coercive elements in law and practice,” he said. “Forced abortion and sterilization are egregious violations of human rights, and should be of concern to the global human rights community, as well as to the Chinese themselves. Unfortunately, we have not seen willingness in other parts of the international community to stand with us on these human rights issues.”

Dewey told the committee that the Bush administration will continue to seek engagement with the Chinese authorities and urge China to move to a human rights-based approach to population issues.

STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL DEFENDS U.S. POLICY ON LANDMINES

Richard Kidd says U.S. leads world in solving landmine problem

By Eric Green
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The United States leads the world in helping to solve the global landmine problem, says a U.S. State Department official, rejecting a recent editorial in an American newspaper that suggested otherwise.

In his rebuttal letter published December 13 in the Post-Gazette of Pittsburgh, the State Department’s Richard Kidd said the newspaper’s assertion that the U.S. government is contributing to the global landmine problem is patently false.

In fact, said Kidd, “no country does more to reduce the harmful effects of landmines than the United States.”

Kidd, who is director of the State Department's Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement, said the United States has provided over \$900 million to demining programs in 46 countries, close to half the worldwide total.

In a December 2 editorial entitled "Lurking Danger/American Support is Needed to Ban Landmines," the Post-Gazette argued that the United States is "pinching pennies" when it should be "doing everything possible to solve a problem it helped create."

But Kidd said the United States is phasing out all landmines in its inventory that are "persistent" (meaning "long-lasting") and nondetectable. The United States is the only major military power to make such sweeping commitments, Kidd said.

Kidd said the United States has not signed the Ottawa Convention curbing anti-personnel mines and did not participate in the November 29-December 3 conference reviewing that treaty in Nairobi, Kenya, for several "good reasons."

The Ottawa Convention, also known as the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty is formally titled "the 1997 Convention on the prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer or Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction."

First and foremost, Kidd said, the United States has an obligation to protect its armed forces as they carry out U.S. global defense commitments. The Ottawa Convention, Kidd said, would prohibit U.S. forces from employing munitions that those forces might need for carrying out their defense commitments.

In addition, Kidd said the Ottawa Convention addresses only anti-personnel mines and permits equally damaging anti-vehicle mines. U.S. policy, however, addresses all types of persistent and nondetectable landmines, "and we are pushing for global restrictions on all such mines in two separate international conventions."

The Post-Gazette said the United States did not attend the Nairobi conference because it apparently cost too much.

But Kidd said that even though the United States is not a party to the Ottawa Convention, organizers of the Nairobi event expected the United States to pay 22 percent of the conference costs, meaning the United States would have had to pay well over an estimated \$100,000.

"We believe this money is better spent on clearing mines and saving lives," said Kidd.

Separately, Harry McCloy, senior adviser to the State Department Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement, says that relatively few Americans and "even fewer folks overseas" know that the United States operates the world's "oldest and largest -- by far -- inter-agency program to support mine clearance, mine risk education, mine survivors assistance, and research and development to come up with even better ways to detect and clear mines for humanitarian purposes."

In November 16 remarks at a conference in Arlington, Virginia, McCloy said that at some point in 2005 the United States will reach the \$1 billion mark in investing in humanitarian mine action around the world.

More information about U.S. policy on landmines is available online at:

<http://www.state.gov/t/pm/wra>

Pleases Note: Most texts and transcript mentioned in the U.S. Mission Daily Bulletin are available via our homepage: www.usmission.ch

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